

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, please add the following new paragraphs before paragraph [0001]:

[0000.2] CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0000.4] This application is a 35 USC 371 application of PCT/DE 03/01177
filed on April 10, 2003.

Please replace paragraph [0001] with the following amended paragraph:

[0001] ~~Background of the Invention~~ **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0001]:

[0001.5] Field of the Invention

Please replace paragraph [0002] with the following amended paragraph:

[0002] The invention relates to an apparatus for transporting cylindrical objects, in particular containers during a treatment process, such as a sterilization process, ~~taking the generic characteristics of the preamble to the main claim as the point of departure.~~

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0002]:

[0002.5] Description of the Prior Art

Please replace paragraph [0004] with the following amended paragraph:

[0004] The containers, which by means of this apparatus **are transported** in the transporting direction **and** roll about a pivot axis transversely to the transporting direction, are guided such that at the infeed region, the containers can be rotated past a plasma source, for instance, which for the sake of sterilization is also known per se from European Patent Disclosure EP 0 377 788 A1. In the sterilization of these objects, the objects are completely exposed to a low-pressure plasma in the treatment chamber and at the same time can be transported linearly.

Please replace paragraph [0005] with the following amended paragraph:

[0005] ~~Advantages of the Invention~~

SUMMARY AND ADVANTAGE OF THE INVENTION

Page 2, please replace paragraph [0008] with the following amended paragraph:

[0008] With a suitable calculation method or by experimentation, the axial spacing and/or the diameters of the respective shafts can be ascertained in a simple way and then ~~predetermined~~ **selected**, as a function of the geometric dimensions of the cylindrical objects or containers, by ascertaining the path of the center of gravity as a function of the angular position of the respective object or article. As geometric dimensions, in particular the diameter and the length of the particular object can be considered, optionally taking into account the change in center of gravity ~~of~~ **resulting from** geometric designs of a bottle-like opening region of a container. Thus with simple adjustment possibilities, a wider range of container diameters and shapes can be handled.

Page 3, please replace paragraph [0012] with the following amended paragraph:

[0012] Because many adaptations and adjustments to the apparatus can be made from outside, **adjustment by** a tedious exchange of components is dispensed with. The shafts of the transport apparatus of the invention are a readily accessible surface for cleaning, sterilizing, or similar treatment methods.

Please replace paragraph [0013] with the following amended paragraph:

[0013] Advantageously, a plurality of **parallel** transport paths with the appropriate shafts can also be realized ~~parallel~~ in one treatment chamber. The transporting can furthermore be done

with little energy input, because now only rolling friction occurs at the containers, with an extremely low coefficient of friction.

Page 4, please replace paragraph [0015] with the following amended paragraph:

[0015] ~~Drawing~~ **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Please replace paragraph [0016] with the following amended paragraph:

[0016] One exemplary embodiment of a transport apparatus for sterilizing cylindrical containers ~~will now be~~ **is** described **herein below**, in conjunction with the ~~drawing. Shown are:~~ **drawings, in which:**

Please replace paragraph [0017] with the following amended paragraph:

[0017] Fig. 1[[,]] **is** a schematic ~~elevation~~ **isometric** view of a transport apparatus with a plurality of rotatable shafts and cylindrical containers that can be transported with it;

Please replace paragraph [0018] with the following amended paragraph:

[0018] Fig. 2[[,]] **is** a detail showing two shafts, which are inclined in the transporting direction of the containers; and

Please replace paragraph [0020] with the following amended paragraph:

[0020] ~~Description of the Exemplary Embodiment~~

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Please replace paragraph [0021] with the following amended paragraph:

[0021] In **the drawings** ~~Fig. 1, a first~~ **an** exemplary embodiment of an apparatus 1 for transporting containers 2 is shown, with which the containers 2 are transported, for instance via suitable shunts, throughout a treatment chamber, such as a sterilization chamber **20 (Fig. 3)**, not described further here. In this sterilization chamber **(20)**, the containers can be exposed to a plasma, which is generated at a plasma source that is supplied for instance with high-

frequency or microwave energy. The apparatus 1 has a number of rotatable shafts, of which here only the shafts 3 and 4 are identified, since between them the containers 2 are transported, as will be described in still further detail in conjunction with the other drawings.

The spacings between the containers 2 may be adjusted by means of a worm gear 11 mounted on at least one shaft 3, 4.

Page 5, please replace paragraph [0023] with the following amended paragraph:

[0023] The decisive, determining factor for the angular position β of the container 2 is the geometric position of its center of gravity 7. This center of gravity 7 depends substantially on the height and diameter of the container 2. As a function of the geometric data of the bearing system of the container 2, in this case the diameters 8 and 9 of the shafts 3 and 4 and/or their axial spacing 10, a center of gravity curve 11 is found for a variable angular position β .

Please replace paragraph [0024] with the following amended paragraph:

[0024] With regard to an energy equilibrium consideration, the minimum **requirement** of this so-called spline function is the stable position of equilibrium of the container 2 in the bearing system of the shafts 3 and 4. The particular angular position β of the container 2 can be varied in a stable way by means of a variation of the axial spacing 10 of the shaft bearings **and/or** the diameter 8 and/or 9 of the shafts 3 and 4.

Please add the following **new** paragraph after paragraph [0026]:

[0027] The foregoing relates to preferred exemplary embodiment of the invention, it being understood that other variants and embodiments thereof are possible within the spirit and scope of the invention, the latter being defined by the appended claims.